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PREFACE.

THE author has enjoyed confidential relations with one of the highest officers of the government, and speaks with authority when he says that the failure of international copyright has been due less to opposition in the Cabinet than to *outside* interference with Congress. In this pamphlet he has handled without gloves those American publishers who steal English and refuse to buy American books. He has held up to just indignation those men whose patriotism is in their pockets. He has shown that their immoderate rapacity is the certain cause of our past and present intellectual vassalage, and makes an earnest appeal for the future freedom of American literature. STYLUS.

WASHINGTON, January 20, 1879.

AMERICAN PUBLISHERS

AND

ENGLISH AUTHORS.

For more than eighty years a disgraceful blot has rested upon our national escutcheon. Small in the beginning, it has grown year by year, until it has attained a gigantic size, blackened the fair name of our country, and made the United States of America a by-word among the nations of the earth. What is this blot, and who have placed it upon our escutcheon? This blot is the stealing of English books by American publishers. It *was* this practice which made possible Sydney Smith's sneering inquiry sixty years since—"Who reads an American book?" It *is* this practice which makes our country, though politically free and commercially great, the intellectual vassal of Great Britain. The truth must and shall be told—if the world has been taught to believe that there is no such thing as an American literature, it is due to the selfish greed of those American publishers who steal foreign, instead of buying American, books. The man who breaks into your house at night and steals the watch from under your pillow, does so at the risk of his life; it requires some pluck, but the publisher who steals the works of foreign authors is a coward and a sneak. Whatsoever is mean, whatsoever is unjust, whatsoever is dishonest is embraced in the name of literary pirate. He may rear a business palace of brick and iron; he may load his private residence with works of art; he may be a millionaire and entertain distinguished strangers, but he is still infamous in the estimation of all honorable men. He not only violates the graves of the dead, but he robs and defrauds the living, and takes the bread out of the mouths of the widow and the orphan.

It is a deplorable fact that American publishers are so constantly in

the habit of "appropriating" (we like a *genteel* word) the works of English authors that they feel no shame for such dishonesty—they have become so hardened in sin that they steal without blushing; by changing a famous line of Goldsmith's, we can describe their case exactly: *they publish books by stealth and do not blush to find it infamy.* The English language does not furnish words sufficiently strong to express our boundless contempt for these literary jackals, who, like the "Conqueror worm" of the poet, fatten upon the brains of the dead, and, unlike all other robbers, grow rich by stealing from the poor. Compared with these American Bookaneers, Robin Hood and Rob Roy were honest and honorable gentlemen. There was a dash of romance and a spirit of adventure in the daring deeds of the hero of Sherwood Forest and the bold freebooter of the Highlands. They exposed themselves to a thousand dangers and to daily death. They robbed the rich, but they were generous to the poor. Compared with the American Bookaneers, Captain Kyd, bloody and remorseless pirate as he was, may be called a brave and gallant hero, for he robbed with a rope around his neck, knowing that, if he was caught, he should be hanged. He knew his danger, and was not afraid to perish therein. But the American Bookaneers rob with impunity and are protected in their villainy. Perfectly free from danger, they go on piratical cruises on the high seas of literature, and return laden with rich and valuable prizes which yield immense profit in ready money. Like the Rich Man in the Bible, who also defrauded the poor, they feast sumptuously every day. Let them remember at their feasts that the champagne which they drink is made from the blood of poor authors.

Mr. George P. Putnam was an honor to the American book trade. He did more for the protection of American literature than any six of the so-called American publishers who now cry aloud for American patronage, while they cry down American books. Their magnificent mercantile establishments have been erected from the pickings and stealings of foreign authors. They turn the cold shoulder upon their own countrymen. Ask one of our "great" publishers to purchase an American novel, and he will laugh in your face, and tell you he can get a better book *for nothing.* Is it, then, for nothing that he gets this "better book?" Is good name nothing—is honor nothing? Does he not value this precious jewel of the soul? No, because the loss of his good name instead of making him *poor,* makes him *rich.* His soul is in his purse. Touch that and he feels it, but as to appealing to his sense of justice and honor, you might as well appeal to the

hungry wolf when in sight of his prey. Mr. Putnam was an earnest advocate for an international copyright law between the United States and Great Britain. He knew the American publishers well, and from his knowledge of them he was convinced that by such a law alone could they be restrained from robbing English authors. He knew, also, that such a law would afford the best encouragement to American authors by placing English authors upon the same footing with our own countrymen. At present, our authors, having to compete with books stolen from English authors, cannot find a market for their works. Their manuscripts are "declined with thanks," because the American publisher employs his capital more profitably in printing foreign books which cost him nothing. What is the result? The young American poet and novelist, after vainly endeavoring to get a publisher, is compelled to do hack work in order to live, while American publishers become millionaires from the unpaid books of English authors.

Long ago Tom Hood said: "America, in the absence of an international copyright, can never have a native literature." Where are our poets, our novelists, our essayists, our critics? Is our "greatest"—our only "great"—poet, Longfellow, "a bard sublime, whose footsteps will echo down the corridors of time?" Is he not an imitator of the poets of the olden time—an echo of distant music rather than a great original poet? Can he be compared with the bards about whom he sings? Is he worthy a place in the Pantheon of the poets? We believe time, the great unmaker of reputations, will decide against America's "greatest poet." Longfellow is a dilettante versifier. His love of ornament is excessive; his poems are inventories of jewelry shops done into rhyme. In fact, like the Roman maiden, he is so loaded down with ornament that it smothers him. Of late Mr. Longfellow has devoted himself to translations and editing Books of Beauty and Poems of Places. Imagine Byron, Pope, Milton, or any of the grand old masters of song putting their names to a Book of Beauty!

Was not Bryant a tame imitator of the tame Wordsworth? Is not Lowell's description of him, as a "smooth iceberg that never is ignified," so true that even the poet's most enthusiastic admirers cannot deny it? Were not his admirers rather the admirers of the *man* than the *poet?* Was not his best poetry written when he was a boy? Was not his fame prolonged by his longevity? These are questions to which we fearlessly defy negative answers. We confidently predict that in ten years Bryant will not be read in the United States any more than his master Wordsworth is now read in England. Who are our younger

poets, and what are they doing? Stoddard, whose early verses gave promise of a rich poetical harvest, was compelled to join the paste-pot-and-scissors brigade, and edited the *Bric-a-Brac Series*—books good enough in their way, but not in the way of a poet. Stedman, who formerly wooed the muse with partial success, has descended to trade, and the poet is lost in the banker. Lowell has not found poetry so profitable as his professorship at Harvard, his editorship of the *North American Review* and *Atlantic Monthly*, and his present political position of Minister to Spain. A general survey of American literature fails to discover the promise among the present generation of writers of even a third rate poet. The universal consent of the world has placed Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare upon the top of Mount Parnassus. The second place is occupied by Tasso, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Byron, Tennyson; in the third place, but much lower down, is a mixed group, composed of such poets as Ariosto, Goldsmith, Moore, Scott, Shelley, Poe, Longfellow. To none of these classes do any of the rising American authors belong.

In no department of literature is America so deficient as in fiction, and in no department of literature have our publishers stolen so extensively—wholesale robbery is the only term by which it can be properly decsribed. Enter a bookstore in New York, Philadelphia, or Boston, and inquire for an American novel, and what are you shown? A dozen volumes, three-fourths of which are unmitigated trash: the sensational rubbish of Mrs. Southworth, Mrs. Holmes, Augusta J. Evans, overshadowing a dainty story by Aldrich, or an artistic novel by Henry James, jr. These same shelves are loaded with reprints of English novels, which cost the publishers nothing except for poor paper, poorer type, and poorest binding. We do not mean those "cheap and nasty" "libraries" which have flooded the country during the last two or three years: they are the most villainous *things* in the shape of books that ever offended the eyes of man or woman. The devil combined with the lowest class of book pirates to produce this atrocious trash, which can only be called literature as the immortal * daubs of Whistler are called art. Bad as these so-called libraries are, and deplorable as is the injury they do to American literature, we do not think their publishers are half so much to blame as are those more pretentious publishers who have, by their own successful bookaneering career, led the way to this deepest, darkest, and most damning spot

* Made immortal by the terrible criticism of Ruskin.

upon our national escutcheon. But these "cheap library" abominations are beneath our contempt, and, therefore, beneath our notice. We only alluded to them in order to show the enormous wrong inflicted upon English and American authors by "respectable" publishers who have, by years of successful stealing, made this thing possible. What chance is there for American novelists when the best as well as the worst literature of England is scattered through the country, and sold for ten, fifteen, and twenty cents a number? International copyright is the only remedy for this outrage. It has been delayed too long: it cannot come too soon.

The United States presents the extraordinary spectacle of a nation of novel readers with a handful of novelists. By novelists, we mean writers like Fielding, Scott, Bulwer, Thackeray, and others whose names will live for ever in English literature—not the Southworths, Flemings, Holmeses, and other sensational mongers who disgrace American literature. That superfine, vulgar cockney, Dickens (a snob from first to last), wrote books, which, though filled with caricatures instead of characters, were very popular with unthinking people, and it paid American publishers to reprint his works. So profitable were they that six editions were in the course of publication at one time in the United States, but only one of the six American publishers had the honesty to allow Dickens anything. The stealing of English books has been so universal among American publishers that scarcely one, even of the most "respectable," can exclaim with the poet: "*Thou canst not say that I did it.*"

The American publisher who discourages American authors and prints foreign books is one of the worst enemies of his country. Instead of educating our people with American ideas and American principles, the circulation of foreign books fills their minds with anti-democratic sentiments and unpatriotic ideas, and aspirations dangerous to the best interests of our country. The unpatriotic spirit that has of late years spread over the whole land may be attributed, in a great measure, to the introduction of monarchical sentiments into our democratic country through the republication here of foreign books. Our publishers know very well that the public loss is their private gain, but so long as they fill their pockets they don't care what injury they do to their country. What has been the natural result of all this? We are the intellectual slaves of a nation far inferior to us in war, in political freedom, in commercial greatness, and in practical genius. Thanks to our publishers, we are in this condition. But their business palaces are built,

their houses loaded with pictures, their tables furnished with costly wines, and they go smilingly on in their iniquitous career. Why are Americans the laughing stock of every capital in Europe? Because their heads are filled with foreign ideas to the exclusion of genuine American, democratic ideas, and they are totally ignorant of their country's history, politics, literature, and government. They despise their country's institutions because they are ignorant of them. Hence the disgusting flunkeyism displayed by the majority of Americans abroad. They ape foreign airs, and are highly complimented if they are mistaken for foreigners. Flunkeyism abroad is the natural result of ignorance at home; and ignorance at home is the result of American publishers stealing foreign books. There is nothing more despicable in the eyes of all sensible people than to see an American citizen playing the tuft-hunter and sycophant at the skirts of the effete aristocracy of Europe. Lord Brougham said long ago that the great charm of Americans was the distinct national characteristics they presented to the world. This charm has almost entirely disappeared, and most of the travelling Americans nowadays present only the characteristics of the vulgarian and the vanity of the fool. They are ashamed of their country whose unworthy sons they are, and like Alcibiades when living among the soft and effeminate people of the East, they imitate, or try to imitate, the manners of Europeans. It is an infamous fact that American publishers have so thoroughly saturated the minds of our people with foreign literature, good, bad, and indifferent, that they generally refuse to read American books. An Englishman takes a just pride in his country's literature; a Frenchman glories in the national literature of France; even the phlegmatic German is aroused to enthusiasm over the genius of Fatherland. The American alone treats with contempt the literature of his country.

We have shown the fatal result of the bookaneering practice of our publishers in poetry and fiction. In native history, which more particularly appeals to the patriotism of our people, what do we discover? We have not a single history of the United States worthy of the name. By history we mean a great and comprehensive work, such as Hume, Smollett, and Macaulay's *History of England*. The reader will probably say, "We have *Bancroft's History of the United States*." We have Bancroft's history of the settlement of America, the history of the colonies, and the history of the Revolutionary War, in ten large volumes, but not the history of the United States, for the United States did not exist until 1789, and Bancroft's history ends with the

War of the Revolution in 1782. We regret to add that from Mr. Bancroft's advanced age—fourscore years—his life will probably close before his *History of the United States* begins.

Although Bancroft's history is not the history of the United States, still it treats of subjects that should deeply interest the people of this country : the settlement and growth of the colonies ; the French and Indian wars ; the origin and history of the quarrel with England, culminating in the Declaration of Independence and the glorious War of the Revolution, when thirteen weak and scattered colonies dared the wager of battle with the most powerful nation on earth. In spite of all this nearly ten times as many copies of Macaulay's *History of England* were sold in the United States in six months than of Bancroft's history in twenty years. Yet, Bancroft is superior to Macaulay in many of the most essential qualities of a historian : he is more dignified, more impartial, more accurate ; he is less of a partisan, less of a rhetorician, less of a declaimer. Macaulay writes history like an advocate pleading a cause ; Bancroft like a judge giving a judicial decision. Macaulay never forgets that he is the Whig historian of a Whig Revolution : he can see nothing good in James II., nothing bad in William of Orange. Macaulay's history treats of a Revolution of very little interest to Americans ; Bancroft's history treats of subjects which should be of very great interest to us. Macaulay himself expressed surprise that his history should be so extensively read in this country. "I have," he writes, "a most intoxicating letter from Everett. He says that no book has ever had such a sale in the United States, except the Bible and one or two school books of universal use." In reply to this "intoxicating letter," Macaulay wrote to Edward Everett : "It would be mere affectation in me not to own that I am greatly pleased by the success of my history in America. But I am almost as much puzzled as pleased ; for the book is quite insular in spirit. There is nothing cosmopolitan about it. I do not understand how it should be acceptable to a people who have no kings, no lords, no established Church, no Tories, nay (I might say) no Whigs in the English sense of the word. The dispensing power, the ecclesiastical supremacy, the doctrines of divine right and passive obedience, must all, I should have thought, seemed strange, unmeaning things to the vast majority of the inhabitants of Boston and Philadelphia." That Macaulay's *History of England* had hundreds of thousands of readers in the United States, and Bancroft's *History of the United States* only tens of thousands is another sin at the door of American publishers. Six rival bookaneers

were engaged at the same time in pushing edition after edition of Macaulay's history upon the American market, filling their own pockets but adding little or nothing to the author's bank account. One of these pirates very generously presented Macaulay with a "cheap edition" of his work, the sight of which must have had the effect of a dose of ipecac upon the fastidious historian accustomed to the superb work of the Longmans. This unwonted act of generosity on the part of the American bookaneer reminds us of one of those rare freaks of kindness by the pirates of the Gulf of Mexico, who sometimes presented a leaky boat, a bag of mouldy biscuits, and a keg of bad rum to their victims, after robbing them of their vessel, cargo, and stores.

Sadly deficient as American literature is in poetry, fiction, and history, it is even worse in criticism. Matthew Arnold says one of the characteristic features of English criticism is its "disinterestedness." American criticism is the very reverse of this. In fact, we have no literary criticism in the true, artistic meaning of the term. Our book notices, far from possessing the characteristic of "disinterestedness," are generally puffs, purchased either directly or indirectly. The amount of praise bestowed upon a book is almost always determined by the amount of money paid for the publisher's advertisement. The majority of readers are ignorant of the "tricks of the trade," and believe that everything which appears in print is true. Purchased puffs can only have a temporary effect, but it answers the publisher's purpose, which is to sell the book. In some cases the author lends himself to this literary dishonesty, and puffs his own book in the papers. Nearly all of our leading publishers have their literary organs, in which their own publications are praised without stint. Expressions are used in speaking of trashy novels which would be extravagant if applied to the novels of Scott and Thackeray: "A Work of Immense Power;" "the Most Exquisite Book we Ever Read;" "This Volume will Carry the Author's Name down to the latest Posterity"—these are samples of publishers' puffs. These "criticisms" are about as valuable as the comments scribbled by milliner girls and dry goods clerks upon the well-thumbed novels from the circulating libraries: "Arthur Lovell is a sweet fellow;" "Nannie is a noble girl;" "Tom Rackett is a sad dog;" "This is a Beautiful Book;" "This is a Powerful Novel," etc. So the majority of our book notices are utterly worthless as literary criticism, utterly useless for the formation of a judgment upon a book. Pascal, having sold his splendid talents to the Arnaulds for gold, was commanded by his employers to

direct his purchased pen against the Jesuits. Having exhausted his matchless wit and merciless satire against two of the fathers of the society, he said, in a postscript, "*Since* writing my letter, I have read Fathers Barri and Benet." Do not many of our small critics imitate Pascal's literary dishonesty, without imitating his French frankness?

American publishers are extremely sensitive to adverse criticism. They would know, if they had any literary knowledge, that a book which cannot stand strong and healthy criticism must be "poor indeed." There never was written a more severe criticism than the *Edinburgh Review's* on Lord Byron's youthful verses. Was the "young lord" crushed by it? No, it only aroused his latent genius. The same review criticised Scott's poems with unmeasured severity. Was Scott crushed? No, he burst upon the world with increased splendor as the "Author of *Waverley*." Tennyson was pretty severely treated by the critics when he first appeared before the world as a poet, but he has lived to be the first poet of his age. English literature has been kept pure and strong by vigorous criticism. American literature has been kept tame and diluted by the want of vigorous criticism.

> "Low droops our Eagle's eye to find us still
> Cowed 'neath his wing—by Albion's gray goose quill.
> Why boast of Britain foiled on Bunker crest?
> Her pen still rules the Rebel of the West.
> Slaves of her press, our liberty of speech
> Is but to echo what her journals preach."

American publishers think themselves "mighty smart" and fully up to the "tricks of the trade." They are up to the "trick" of stealing English books and paying American authors (in the few cases when they publish American books) one-tenth while they quietly pocket nine-tenths. They are "smart" enough to know that a new novel by George Eliot, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, Miss Muloch, Mary Cecil Hay, Miss Thackeray, Miss Yonge, Anthony Trollope, Henry Greville, and other well-known novelists, will sell. It does not require much brains to do that. But it does require some brains to discover the talents of an unknown writer, and that is just where our publishers show themselves to be sadly wanting. They look upon books like any other merchandise, and are afraid to touch a new writer until he has a marketable value. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* came very near being rejected by Jewett & Co. Mrs. Stowe was then unknown as a writer, and they were afraid it would not pay as a business speculation. The wife of one of the firm insisted that it would sell. The result

proved that she was really the *better half*, for it sold better than any book ever printed before or since. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* having established Mrs. Stowe's literary reputation, she has not, since its publication, had to seek a publisher.

We do not mean to insinuate that only American publishers are wanting in judgment: it is a peculiarity of the trade all the world over. A dozen striking instances can be given of mistakes made by English publishers in this particular. *Robinson Crusoe* was declined by nearly all the London booksellers. At last it fell into the hands of a publisher who was more speculative than the others. He brought it out, and made £100,000 by his venture. How many *pennies* De Foe received has not been ascertained. Both Swift and Pope said the *Beggar's Opera* would not succeed: it took the town by storm, and was as great success as *Gulliver's Travels*. The celebrated *Rejected Addresses* were rejected by John Murray, to whom they were offered for £20. After they had been published by the authors on their own account, and sixteen editions exhausted, the same *keen-sighted* Murray gave £130 for the right to issue a new edition. We are glad to add that Horace and James Smith realized more than £1000 by the book. Kinglake's *Eothen* was declined by twenty London publishers; finally the author took it to an obscure bookseller and had it brought out at his own expense. It proved to be one of the most brilliant books of travel ever published. *Vanity Fair* was declined by all the leading London houses. At last Thackeray determined to bring it out in monthly parts; it made a great hit, and the author's future success was assured. *Jane Eyre* went the rounds of the publishing houses of London, but could not find a market until the daughter of a publisher accidentally discovered the MS. in an iron safe, where it had lain until it was mouldy. She saw the extraordinary merit of the novel, and induced her father to publish it. The first volume of Blair's *Sermons* was submitted to Strahan, the King's printer. After examining it the astute bookseller wrote to the author and discouraged the publication. It required all the eloquence of Dr. Johnson to induce Strahan to purchase the MS. for £100. When the book was published the sale was so large that the publisher gladly paid £300 for the second volume, and £600 for all the subsequent volumes. *Tristram Shandy* was offered to a bookseller for £50 and declined. Stern, then, very sensibly published it himself: the book made a tremendous sensation, and put its author in the very front rank of English humorists. The work is too tiresome to be read in these days of ocean telegraphs and lightning expresses.

Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella* was offered to Murray and declined. Longman was also afraid to venture upon its publication. Finally, Bentley was induced to publish the work, which was so successful that he declared it to be the best book he had ever issued. Beresford's *Miseries of Human Life* was offered in vain for £20, but when it was published its sale was so enormous that the profits were £5000. Buchan's work on *Domestic Medicine* was offered to all the booksellers of Edinburgh for £100. They were all afraid to touch it. At length, the author published it himself, and after it had gone through *twenty-five* editions the copyright was sold for £1600. The bookseller who bought the manuscript of *The Vicar of Wakefield* at the earnest solicitation of Dr. Johnson, held it for two years, until *The Traveller* had made Goldsmith's reputation. It was then published, made the bookseller's fortune and the poet's fame, and has continued to delight the world for more than a century.

These are a few illustrious examples, taken at random from literary history, but there are thousands of cases which have never been recorded, where genius has been nipped in the bud, and quenched forever by the cold indifference of mercenary or stupid publishers. Every publisher's experience in this country would show hundreds of examples of flowers of genius, "born to blush unseen, and waste their sweetness on the desert air" of ignorant traders in books, who do not judge a work by its own merit, but by the reputation of its author. A publisher should be a man of letters as well as a man of types; he should know the inside as well as the outside of books; his reading should extend further than the title page.

How many American publishers have ever displayed any literary talents? We could enumerate half a hundred eminent English publishers who were also eminent authors. Hutton, of Birmingham, after working his way from poverty to wealth as a publisher, "took up his pen at the advanced age of fifty-six;" he "drove the quill thirty years, during which time he wrote and published thirty books." His *History of Birmingham*, the first of his works, gave him a national reputation. Richardson, the celebrated author of *Sir Charles Grandison*, was a publisher; also Whiston, the best translator of *Josephus;* Smellie, the naturalist; Godwin, the novelist; Moxon, the poet; Dolby, the Shakespearean scholar. Christie, the well-known book-auctioneer of London, wrote four exhaustive works on the taste and literature of the ancient Greeks. Cochrane, who was for seven years the editor of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, was also an eminent book-

seller. His bibliographical knowledge caused him to be chosen to draw up the catalogue of Sir Walter Scott's rich and interesting library at Abbotsford. William Hone, author of the famous *Every Day Book* and *Year Book*, was originally a bookseller. His collected works would fill a dozen octavo volumes. The world-renowned brothers, William and Robert Chambers, well deserve the reputation they have so worthily won as author-publishers. They were both authors as well as publishers, but Robert was, also, editor of the *Edinburgh Journal*, which his elder brother William founded. At the age of twenty Robert wrote and published his first work—*Illustrations of the Author of Waverley*—which gained for him the friendship of Sir Walter Scott. The following year he produced the *Traditions of Edinburgh*, which gave the young author an immediate popularity. Book after book followed each other in rapid succession, until in 1864 he published his great work, the *Book of Days*, making seventy volumes in all written by him during forty-two years of an unprecedented business career. William Chambers' literary work was not so great as that of his brother, but he found time, during his multifarious occupations, to write the *Book of Scotland* (being a valuable history of the legal constitution and customs of his native country), *Travels in Italy*, a *History of Peebleshire*, and the *Memoir of Robert Chambers*. We regret to be obliged to add that, owing to the want of an international copyright, these industrious brothers were deprived in the United States of all pecuniary return for their intellectual labors; Robert Chambers justly complained that he had never received one penny for the *Annuals*, *Journals*, and *Miscellanies* that had been republished in this country, and by the sale of which the American publishers had reaped a golden harvest.

William Longman, of the great London publishing house of that name, wrote *A Tour in the Alps*, and a *History of the Life and Times of Edward III*. The career of Charles Knight as an editor, publisher, and author is one of the most interesting in the literary annals of the nineteenth century. One of his early enterprises was *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, which contained Macaulay's first literary work, and of which Knight was both the editor and publisher. This was followed by the *Penny Magazine*, also edited and published by him, and which reached a circulation of 200,000 in ten months. This great success induced Mr. Knight to undertake the *Penny Encyclopædia*, which proved more useful to the world than profitable to the publisher. Knight's *Pictorial History of England*, *Illustrated London*, *Shake-*

speare, Popular History of England, Half Hours with the Best Authors, have obtained a world-wide celebrity.

What can the book-trade of the United States offer to match this brilliant array of author-publishers? A diligent search has discovered *three* authors among our publishers. One of these, Matthew Carey, was an Irishman, whose books have long since been forgotten; his son, Henry C. Carey, wrote several pamphlets *against* international copyright, which contained some of the best arguments in *favor* of that only practical remedy for the wrong and injustice done to authors, American and foreign. The third American publisher who was also an author was Mr. George P. Putnam, whose *World's Progress* still holds its place as a valuable work of reference. We take great pleasure in paying this passing tribute to Mr. Putnam, because he was the friend and generous protector of American authors. Several, now living, who have won their way to fame, if not to fortune, owe their first start up the steep and thorny way to his kind sympathy and warm encouragement.

It is not with malice that we have exposed the extraordinary want of literary talent among American publishers. It is to show why they are so utterly incapable of discovering unknown talent, or of appreciating the merit of a book by an obscure writer. Hence their reprinting of popular English books, and their neglecting American books, unless written by authors of established reputation. But, in both cases, the publisher gets the lion's share of the spoils. He "reaps, who has not sowed; he takes up, who has not put down." Let us examine the profit to publisher and author on some popular American novel. Take, for instance, Rev. E. P. Roe's last load of fictitious rubbish, *A Face Illumined;* 16,000 copies have been sold in less than three months. Upon these 16,000, the author would receive, upon the usual royalty of ten per cent, $2400. The expenses of publishing the book would be, in round numbers: printing, $1000; paper, $1000; binding, $2000; discount to the trade at 33⅓ per cent., $8000; royalty to author, $2400; leaving a net profit to the publisher of $9500. So, the publisher, who sits comfortably in his office reading the morning paper, makes four times as much as the author of the book. Now, we do not mean to say that the reverend Roe was not sufficiently paid for his novel. On the contrary, we think he received just $2400 too much, for the book is absolutely valueless from a literary point of view. When the preacher abandons the pulpit for the novelist's desk, it is generally a gain to his congregation and a loss to the reading

public. Preachers, as a rule, are not men of the world: they are lamentably ignorant of the busy, bustling life around them. Their views are false, their ideas strained, their sentiment soft, their style weak, and their books are such as make sick the hearts of all sensible people. It is only such reverend rascals as Swift and Sterne that write books which evince a knowledge of the world, and their books, which were the delight of the eighteenth century, are too indelicate to suit the purer taste of the nineteenth. Judging from the number of books written by preachers, the cloth must be a very idle profession, for the authors of about one-third of the publications of the present day have *reverend* before their names. But enough of this: let us return to the case of Publisher and Author. Take, as another example, the novels of Christian Reid, which are pure and refined and can safely be put in the hands of the most innocent girl, which is more than can be said of nine-tenths of the books which form the only reading of the majority of American women. Eight thousand copies of *Bonny Kate* have been sold, yielding a net profit of $3000 to the publishers, while the author, upon the usual royalty, received only $600. We unhesitatingly pronounce this sort of dealing ungenerous and denounce it as unjust.

The result of all this is, that publishers become rich and authors remain poor; publishers live in Fifth Avenue palaces and authors in Bleecker Street garrets; publishers ride in carriages, authors go on foot, or ride in cars and stages; publishers quaff champagne out of the skulls of authors, while authors drink beer out of pewter mugs. A rich author is sometimes read about but seldom seen. Washington Irving, the most illustrious author in the literary annals of America, and who lived to be a classic, after an active literary career of nearly sixty years, died worth only $200,000, which was an average of less than $3500 per annum. Edgar A. Poe, who is regarded by eminent European critics as the greatest genius America has yet produced, received only $10 for his masterpiece, *The Raven*. He lived in poverty and died in a charity hospital, while his collected works (published after his death), which cost the original publisher little or nothing, have been a source of pecuniary return to himself and his successor.

We do not propose to go through the long list of American publishers for the last eighty years, and bring to light their pickings and stealings from English authors. Such an enumeration would be neither edifying nor instructive. But there is one house that has stood preeminently prominent in the picking and stealing business for more than

half a century. It is hardly necessary to say that we refer to that highly respectable and eminently pious band of brothers, the Harpies. Beginning as printers, they soon became pirates, and will continue so to the end, or until an international copyright puts a stop to their bookaneering career. That a house built upon the bones of the dead and cemented by the sweat of the living, should be regarded as respectable is a striking illustration of the power of money in this country. The members of this firm may be, in their private lives, eminently pious from a Methodistical point of view ; if so, it does not prevent them from being infamously piratical in their public practices. Fifty years ago they began their *Library of Stolen Novels*, with *Pelham*, and up to the end of the year 1878 it had amounted to six hundred and fourteen different books. This list includes the most popular English novels that have appeared during the last half century. Millions of copies of these have been sold, enriching the Harpies but paying nothing to the authors except in a few instances where they paid for the advance sheets. They have not confined their stealing to novels, but numerous English works in history, science, travels, etc., have been captured by these bookaneers. One of their first piratical ventures in standard literature was Moore's *Life of Byron*, one of the most saleable books of this century.

About twenty-five years after their publishing career began, *Harpy's Monthly* was started. In the beginning it was a cruiser among the English magazines, stealing a story from one, an essay from another, and articles from all. When it began to publish original contributions a spirit of intolerance was manifested unworthy of any respectable publishing house. This spirit gradually increased, until it reached its fullest development in *Harpy's Weekly*, miscalled a Journal of Civilization. It is a journal of political mendacity, religious bigotry, sectional hate, and partisan prejudice. If such a journal is the representative of American civilization, then the Sandwich Islanders are more civilized than we are. Nothing is too sacred to escape the brutal attacks of their literary hirelings. Lies, which no gentleman would dare utter to another, are repeated over and over again in this "Journal of Civilization." Let these publishers remember the divine command : "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*"

The *Weekly*, of late years so abusive of the South, was, when it paid to do so, the apologist of secession and slavery. As a proof of this, it is only necessary to turn to its pages in the early part of '61. At that time this paper called our national bird the "crippled Ameri-

can eagle ;'' Lincoln was represented with three boon companions at the Astor House, New York, celebrating the death of the Constitution and the Union. Week after week the journal was filled with fulsome eulogies of Jefferson Davis and other Southern leaders. All this was a bid for Southern patronage which they were afraid to lose. For this purpose, they did not hesitate to caricature the President-elect ; for this purpose it defended slavery and the Southern movement ; for this purpose it spoke of the dissolution of the Union as a fixed fact. After the great uprising of the North in the spring of '61, the *Weekly* changed its tune entirely—no one was so loud for the Union as it was. The proprietors declared " that they would rather stop their journal to-morrow than publish a word in it that would make their children blush for the patriotism or manhood of their parents.'' If these " children'' (now grown-up men) do not possess faces of brass they must be crimson with blushes. The patriotism of the Harpies is, and always has been, in their pockets. WILL IT PAY is their motto.

During the year 1878 this house published one hundred and sixty books, *thirty-one* of which were by American authors ; certainly a poor appreciation of native talent by one of our largest publishing houses. What native genius have they discovered, encouraged, and rewarded ? What native writer is indebted to them for his first lift up the ladder of fame ? If an American author produces a novel, and sends it to *Harpy's*, he is politely told by their literary Mantalini that their columns are pre-occupied by foreign writers. They have room for Hardy, Farjeon, Miss Braddon, and other sensational English writers, but from the productions of our own young authors they turn coldly away. *Harpy's Magazine* is now and always has been more English than American. In the past they have published serials by Bulwer, Dickens, Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot ; more recently, William Black, Miss Muloch, Miss Thackeray, F. W. Robinson, Thomas Hardy, have contributed serial stories ; last year, two serials were furnished by two English novelists, and they will be followed by two other serials by other English novelists this year. We should like to know how many American novels they have purchased for their magazine during the thirty years of its existence. An Amerian magazine should be more than American in name only. It should be the " vehicle of American thought ; it should be the organ of American progress ; it should, first, last, and always, endeavor to stimulate American genius.'' The Harpies draw their support from Americans, not from the English, yet we

have the singular spectacle of an American magazine, which is almost exclusively patronized by Americans, publishing English novels exclusively, and "respectfully declining" American novels.

The denunciation by the Harpies of the Canadian publishers as pirates for reprinting American books is one of the most barefaced examples of Satan rebuking sin that has come to our knowledge for many a day. For fifty years this house has been growing rich, richer, richest, from the republication of unpaid-for English books—taking guinea novels and selling them for twenty-five and fifty cents. It is true that they claim that they have "refrained from sending to England reprints of English copyrighted books as a matter of justice and propriety. As far as the circulation in one country of reprints of the copyrighted works of the other was concerned, that was practiced upon both sides of the water, and *honors were easy.*" To this, and the "excessively amusing white heat" of George W. Carleton, the Montreal *Gazette*, of December 12th, 1878, replied with some force and a good deal of humor, as follows:

It is a matter of notoriety to our readers that United States publishers have always seized and reprinted any English books they wished for; that these reprints have been exported into every British colony; that they are with difficulty kept out of England itself; and that every effort which England has made to secure international copyright has utterly come to naught. With cynical frankness, Senator Morrill, in his report to the United States Senate in 1873, asserts that to give the foreign author any consideration would injure the printers and paper-makers of the United States, and raise the price of books to the people, and that *therefore* an international copyright was impossible. The English press railed, the English Government coaxed, but all in vain. The proposition is a sound one; it is cheaper to steal brooms than to buy them.

Owing to the immoderate greed of our publishers, American literature has become one vast grab game: books are published for the sole and simple object of making money. To accomplish this end, the most disgraceful and disreputable means are resorted to. Lying advertisements are inserted in the papers; lying puffs from venal pens are widely spread; old books with new titles are announced as new publications, and so on. Whenever a successful book is put upon the market a certain Philadelphia firm, which has earned an unenviable notoriety for its dishonorable tricks of the trade, immediately announces a "Companion" to this successful book. This is an old trick of theirs. So far back as 1852, when *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

took the world by storm, the Philadelphia firm announced *Life in the South: a Companion to Uncle Tom's Cabin.* When Wilkie Collins' *Woman in White* obtained its deserved success, the same firm issued the *Woman in Black: a Companion to the Woman in White;* when *That Husband of Mine* ran like wild fire around the country, they straightway published *That Lover of Mine, That Girl of Mine,* and similar stuff. When Mrs. Burnett made a successful hit with *That Lass o' Lowrie's,* they went to work and hunted up some of her juvenile stories, which had appeared years before in their magazine, and published them as "charming love stories," by the author of *That Lass o' Lowrie's,* thus leading the public to suppose that these *love stories* were written since the *Lass.* Twenty-five years ago William North, an Englishman, committed suicide in New York, just after writing the last chapter of a novel which was published under the title of the *Slave of the Lamp.* Two years ago this Philadelphia firm issued the same book as the *Man of the World.* But we care not to go over all their "tricks."

There was something in a petition once presented to the House of Commons by Thomas Carlyle, a "writer of books," which moved the sympathies of the public men of England, but failed to touch the hearts of the publishers of the United States. This petition began by showing that the petitioner had "written certain books, being incited thereto by certain innocent and laudable considerations"—that his "labor had found, in money or money's worth, small recompense or none: that if it ever did find recompense it would be at a distant time, when the laborer would probably no longer be in need of money, and those dear to him will be still in need of it." The petition ended by a prayer to the House to forbid "extraneous persons, entirely unconcerned in this adventure of his, to steal from him his small winnings, for a space of *sixty years,* at the shortest. After sixty years they may begin to steal." Our enterprising bookaneers do not wait *sixty days* before they begin to steal English books. Ten days after they are published they arrive in this country, and, in sixty hours, they are on the market smoking hot.

We are writing in the interest of American authors and for the honor of American literature. We desire to see our country—which is the peer of any nation in the world in the arts and sciences and universal education—raised above its present intellectual vassalage to England. It is more than a hundred years since we boldly proclaimed and bravely maintained our political independence—when shall our intellectual in-

dependence be proclaimed? When an international copyright exists between the United States and Great Britain—when American publishers are prevented by law from filling their plethoric pockets by "appropriating" English books. Dr. Holland uses plainer language in speaking upon this subject in *Scribner's Magazine.* He says:

> The refusal on the part of our Government to accord international copyright amounts to self-stultification and self-condemnation. . . . There is nothing under heaven that stands in the way of international copyright but a desire to maintain the profitable freedom of stealing.

When we remember the long and profitable careers of some American bookaneers, we are forced to admit that "selfishness and greed are the strongest impulses in human nature." It is a question involving not only the individual rights of authors and publishers, but the honor of the nation. The only just and honest policy is to place foreign authors upon the same footing with native authors. In other words, if English books are reprinted here, let their authors enjoy the advantage thereof, just as American authors enjoy their small share from the sale of their books. We are in favor of foreign authors having the same privileges as native writers; then, and not till then, shall we have an American literature. So long as a half dozen publishers, who have grown wealthy by stealing foreign books, hold Congress by the nose, there is no chance for international copyright. Congress has always displayed a remarkable ignorance upon this subject. One notable example will be sufficient. When the last effort to pass an international copyright law was made in 1873, Senator Morrill could not understand how an author, who was "already incited to mental labor by the laws of his own country," could find that such a law would operate as a "further incitement." The answer is very simple: It would operate as a "further incitement" by *making American publishers buy American books instead of stealing English books.* That's the whole argument in a nut shell. Here we rest our case of author and publisher.

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